

Categorical Exclusion Documentation

A. Background

BLM Office: El Centro Field Office
1661 S. 4th Street El Centro, CA 92243

DOI-BLM-CA-D070-2016-0027
CACA-56507

Project Title: Ford Performance Vehicle Testing

Location: Imperial Sand Dunes Recreation Area.

Description and Rationale, including any Stipulations:

Ford Motor Company (FMC) is requesting a land use permit (LUP) in order to test their AWD vehicles 40 mph and below with focus in the 0 to 25 mph range. They will conduct accelerations in drive and reverse and tip-ins (pushing the throttle pedal down) while moving.

Most testing will be driving straight lines within BLM designated areas with turns at lower speeds. The purpose is to evaluate the overall performance in off road conditions.

The route will be controlled by safety spotters at each end of a given route and supplemental spotters along the route all in radio contact with the test vehicle at all times.

Medical response personnel will be on hand at all times to provide immediate medical care and implement the provided medical response plan if required. All support vehicles are equipped with safety response equipment including fire suppression (dry chemical and foam), tow straps and tools.

The test vehicles will be equipped with roll bars, 5-point safety harnesses, and fire suppression systems. Drivers wear full face helmets and head and neck restraints during all testing.

B. Land Use Plan Conformance

This action conforms to the California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA) Plan, 1980, as amended because it is specifically provided for or is clearly consistent with the Resource Management Plan (RMP) objectives and decisions as follows:

The proposed action is in conformance with the LUP, even though it is not specifically provided for because it is clearly consistent with the following LUP decisions (objectives, terms, and conditions) and, if applicable, implementation plan decisions:

LUP Name: California Desert Conservation Area

Date Approved: 1980

Other documents: Imperial Sand Dunes Recreation Area Management Plan

Approved: 2013

The CDCA plan designated the lands as Class I. Class I is an intensive use class. Its purpose is to provide for concentrated use of lands and resources. Reasonable protection will be provided for sensitive natural and cultural values. Mitigation of impacts on resources and rehabilitation of impacted areas will occur insofar as possible. The proposed action is of the type and degree of activities allowed within this classification.

C. Compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act

The action is categorically excluded from further documentation under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in accordance with 516 DM 11.9:

E(19): Issuance of short-term (3 years or less) rights-of-way or land use authorization for uses such as storage sites, apiary sites, and construction sites where the proposal includes rehabilitation to restore the land to its natural or original condition.

This categorical exclusion is appropriate for this action because there are no extraordinary circumstances potentially having effects that may significantly affect the environment. The proposed action has been reviewed, and none of the extraordinary circumstances described in 516 DM 2 apply (see attached).

I considered this plan conformance and NEPA compliance record and have determined that the proposed project is in conformance with the approved land use plan(s) and that no further environmental analysis is required.

D. Signature

//Signed//_____

Thomas F. Zale
Field Manager

12/22/15_____

Date

E. Contact

For more information, contact Victoria Hernandez, BLM Realty Specialist, at 760.337.4436 or via email at vhernandez@blm.gov.